

A
SERMON

Preached in

St. *MARIES* Church
AT
GATES-HEAD,
IN THE
COUNTY-PALATINE
OF
DURHAM.

Upon HOSEA V. 12.

Therefore will I be to Ephraim as a moth.

By RICHARD WERGE, A. M. Rector of that Church.

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ІІІ. V. 1820. Н. под. II

A

SERMON

UPON

Hosea V. XII.

Therefore will I be to Ephraim as a moth.



Ephraim, in Scripture, is sometimes taken for the name of a Mount; sometimes, for the name of a Town; sometimes, for the name of a particular Person, the Son of Joseph; sometimes, for the name of a particular Tribe; sometimes, for the ten Tribes, whereof Ephraim was the mightiest: And so it is conceived to be taken here.

In other places of Scripture, God calls Ephraim his First-Born, his dear Son, his pleasant Child. But in this Chapter (after an enumeration of the sins of Ephraim) God threatens to be to them as a moth: He would consume them by Judgments

gradually, till they were as a garment fretted, and eaten, and rotten, and useles.

The Apostle tells us, *Heb. 12. 29*, *That our God is a consuming fire.* Our God, under this Relative (*Our*) which is the first Person, and Plural number, the Apostle compriseth himself, and such as himself was; at least, in the Profession of the true Christian Faith. Likewise, in *Our God*, the Apostle intends Christ; through whom, God is our God; and through whom the free Grace, and rich Mercy of God is discovered: Even, he being provoked by sin, *is a consuming fire.*

At some times God hath appeared in fire that did not consume; as in the Bush, and the Pillars, *Exod. 3. 2. Exod. 13. 21.* But being incensed by impudency in sinnings, and by impenitency, his Power, Justice, Jealousie and Wrath being infinite, he will shew himself as a consuming fire; as a fire that by degrees consumes all before it.

Sometimes, as a blessing, God hath promised the encrease of a People. God promised *Abraham*, *That his seed should be as the sand upon the sea shoar, and as the stars in Heaven. I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will glorifie them, and they shall not be small,* *Jer. 30.*

On the other side, when Gods People have displeased him by their sins, God hath then threatened to cut them short, and to cut them off by judgments, and



and to make them few in number, *Levit. 26. 22.* God threatned that the glory of Jacob should be made thin, and the fatness of his Household wax lean; and that they should be left, as the shaking of an Olive-Tree; two or three berries on the top of the uppermost branch, *Isa. 17. 4, 5, 6.* That they should be as a Beacon on the top of the mountain, and as an Ensign upon a hill, *Isa. 30. 17.* Upon this account David complained that the faithful failed. And the Church, being much wasted and consumed by Judgments, cryeth out, *My leanness, my leanness,* *Isa. 24. 16.*

It is true, That Gods Elective-love, towards his People, is everlasting. It is true also, That Christ hath suffered the punishment for sin, which God required for the satisfaction of Divine Justice: Christ hath appeased Gods wrath, and satisfied his Justice for the sins which he took upon him; so that upon our assurance of the pardon of sin, we are also assured, that Gods Judicial Anger is removed, that no fruit of Gods displeasure (as a part of the Curse) shall befall us. But though Gods Legal and Condemning Anger be removed from his People, yet his Pathetical and Fatherly Displeasure may for their sins be upon them. Though they shall not be destroyed, yet they may be corrected. Though malediction be removed, yet afflictions are not. Though Gods People still remain the Sons of Mercy, and shall be the Heirs of Glo-

ry;

ry ; yet, in this life, for their miscarriages, they may suffer Afflictions that are sharp and bitter. They may suffer Diseases in their Bodies, losses in their Estates, and they may suffer in their Souls by desertions, by a want of the sense of Gods Favour, of the joy and comfort of the Spirit.

It cannot be denied , but that there is sin in the best of men. In many things we offend all.

It cannot be denied , but that God seeth sin wheresoever it is. All things lye open and naked before God.

Now wheresoever God seeth sin, he abhors it. He is a God of pure eyes, he cannot behold iniquity with approbation.

Wheresoever sin is, God is displeased at it ; And although God doth not punish his own People by way of satisfaction to his Justice, yet he doth visit them by way of Castigation.

Judgment begins at the House of God. You only have I known out of all the families of the Earth : therefore I will visit you for your iniquities, Amos 3. 2. Thou art Gilad unto me, and the top of Lebanon ; but I will make thee a Wilderness, and Cities without inhabitant. And in another place, Though the King of Judah were the signet of my right hand, yet would I pluck him off.

God hath sometimes destroyed his People by Famine, when they have been unthankful for the creatures, or brutish and immoderate in the use of them,

God

God hath then taken away from them the sound of the Milstone, and hath sent cleannels of teeth amongst them. Sometimes God sends the Sword to destroy a People. *If you refuse, and rebel, ye shall be devoured by the sword, Isa. 1.*

War is a consuming Judgment. In one battel five hundred thousand have been slain in one day, *2 Chron 15. 17.*

Sometimes God sends the Pestilence among a People, and thereby consumes them. God sent this Judgment among the Israelites, in the time of Moses: One time there died four and twenty thousand; Another time fourteen thousand and seven hundred. In David's time, there died of the Plague threescore and ten thousand: This Judgment is a messenger of Gods sending; an Arrow of Gods shooting; therefore when David had those three Judgments set before him, the Famin, Sword and Pestilence: he chose the Pestilence, saying, *It is better to fall into the hands of God, than into the hands of men.* This Judgment is most properly and immediately from God. God is pleased sometimes that his own People shall be in such a condition, as that there is a terror among them by night; and the Arrow flieth by day, the Pestilence walketh in darkness, and Destruction wasteth at noon-day. God hath other ways of devouring a People, as Fire and Water, &c. But these three are those usual Judgments,

Judgments, whereby he is as a moth to his People, to fret and consume them.

All these Judgments were at once laid upon Jerusalem in an extraordinary manner.

Jerusalem was Situated in that Country that did wear the Garland of Supereminency.

In that part of the World the first Man was Created. There was the Temple, and the Ceremonial Worship. There many of the Prophets were born. There they liv'd, there they died. There many of those Actions were done, which are memoriz'd in the Scripture. There our Saviour Preached personally: There he wrought his Miracles. Nay, there he suffered for the Salvation of sinners.

Now these were great Priviledges and Prerogatives, yet when they sinned against the Lord by their incorrigibleness and unthankfulness, they had those three sore Judgments, laid upon them at once, when it was Besieged and taken.

The Famin was so great among them, that Wives took meat from their Husbands mouths, and Children from their Parents, and Mothers even from their Infants; many perished by this means: and they that remain'd, walked about as so many Images of death. Many others were destroyed by the Pestilence, the Contagion whereof taking away their senses they became mad. And they who a little before wished that the Blood of Christ,

Christ, might be upon them and their Children, soon after, (through the just Judgment of God) had Blood to drink in a full measure. Many thousands were slain at, and after the taking of the City; the residue of them is dispersed into many parts of the World: some of them have lost their Names and the memory of their Predecessors, and they are fallen from the Knowldg, Religion and Industry of their Fore-fathers, and are, for the most part, at this day Mahometans.

God doth not delight in the destruction of a People: *Fury is not in me*, saith the Lord, Isa. 27. 4. God calls this his *Strange work, his act, his strange act*, Isa. 28. 21.

We find God sometimes wishing, *That his People had a heart to fear him, to keep his Commandments.* Sometimes we find God expostulating thus, *How shall I give thee up Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee up Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? My heart is turned within me, and my repentings are kindled together!* Sometimes we find God giving warning to his People of Judgments to come. Sometimes he calls upon them to return.

God doth not presently sweep a Nation with the *Besom of Destruction*: He doth not presently make a full end of a People, but he invites them by mercies, and tryeth them by Judgments by degrees,

grees, before he bring a final, and a fatal destruction upon them.

When the *Jews* would take no notice of Gods Judgments, or of his Mercies, but went on in their stubbornness and impenitency, in their abominable pollutions, their profanating of Gods Ordinances, their murmuring against his Providences, and attempted the death of Gods Prophets, and hated the Person of Christ, his Word, and Works done amongst them ; then they were compassed about with Judgments ; then they, who before fared delicately, embraced the Dunghil ; then they, who had before sold Christ for thirty pence, were themselves sold thirty for a penny : then their House was left to them desolate, that part of the World, which was admirable for fertility, affording all things for necessity and delight, was then for the sins of the People, turned into barrenness.

That part of the World which God for their sins had suffered to be overcome by the *Babylonians*, *Medes*, and *Persians*, and *Grecians* ; God again, for the height of their sins, suffered to be overcome by the *Romans*, and at last by the *Turks*, who have made such havock among them, that there are the Remains of above four thousand Towns and Cities to be seen.

Thus

Thus we see the truth of God in making good his word : As he is faithful in the accomplishing of his promises, so he is real in the execution of his Threatnings and Judgments.

He threatened to be as a moth to *Ephraim*, and he made good his word : because they did not repent, nor return, nor reform, but went on in their sins, he followed them with consuming Judgments, till they were as a moth-eaten Garment. Many thousands of them were consumed by the Famin and Pestilence ; and at length their Civil Government, and their Military Power was dissolved, and their Place and Nation was taken away. And surely these things are written for our Instruction. The sins of others are Recorded in Scripture for our detestation ; and the Judgments upon others, are Recorded for our caution.

In 1 Cor. 10.7. the Apostle sets before the *Corinthians*, the Judgments of God, of old, upon his People, for their sins ; as Caveats for them to keep from these very sins. *Neither be ye Idolaters*, as were some of them. *Neither let us commit fornication*, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. *Neither let us tempt Christ*, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of Serpents. *Neither murmur ye*, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. And in the close, the Apostle maketh this Application. *Now all*

these things happened to us for ensamples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

Surely we have the same sins among us which they had amongst them ; And without repentance unfeigned, and reformation of life, what can we expect ?

The Land of *Judea* was called the Land of *Emmanuel* : *Jerusalem* was the City where *David* (the man after Gods own heart) dwelt : It was one while called *Salem*, which signifies Peace ; another while *Jerusalem*, which signifies the Vision of Peace : Sometimes *Ariel*, which signifies Gods Lion : sometimes *Aholibah*, *Ezek. 23. 22.* which signifies my fixed Pavilion. It was so called as being the place of Gods Habitation.

Jerusalem was called the City of the great King. The Jews were a People, to whom pertained the Adoption, and the Glory, and the Covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the service of God, and the Promises : The Fathers were theirs, of them (as concerning the flesh) Christ came, and yet their sins brought upon them devouring Judgments ; And can we shew any Charter to free us from the like miseries going on in the same sins ? God is able to bring upon us evils, by ways and means which we know not of, and at such a time when we think our selves secure.

If we turn not, God hath whet his Sword, and bent his Bow, and hath made ready all the instruments of death.

When God begins to punish sin in the People, he will also make an end, 1 Sam. 3. 11. Sin is a bitter sweet: honey in the mouth and gravel in the belly. When sin as a meal is ended, then comes a sad reckoning.

Use 1. Instruction. Hence we learn, that Judgments and Calamities upon a People, or Nation, come from God. Shall there be evil in a City, and the Lord hath not done it? I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord have done these things, Isa. 45. 7. A time of Judgment is called a time of the Lords Vengeance. O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand, is the staff of mine indignation, Isa. 10. 5. When Shimei cursed David, said he, Let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him, 2 Sam. 16. 11. So that God is the author of judgments, and though sometimes there are means used, yet such instruments and means are ordained and disposed by God.

As God is merciful, so he is also just: As God hath treasures of blessings, so he hath a store-house of Judgments.

Thus the very Heathens thought, and therefore in the entrance into Jupiters Palace, there were two Vessels set, one full of good things, and the other, like Pandora's Box, full of evil things.

There

There is *malum turpe*, and *malum triste*; *malum culpe*, and *malum pena*, the evil of sin, and the evil of punishment. God is not, nor cannot possibly be the Author of sin, but he is the Author of those evils and miseries that befall men in this World.

3. This should teach us in time of calamity to look at God. Planets, the Elements, Men and Angels, and other Creatures; these, though armed with Gods Commission, yet are they but Gods Instruments. It is God who doth order and dispose them, and he restrains them as he seeth cause: And therefore, when any Judgments fall upon us by the means of any of these, we should look through these secondary causes, at God, as being the Author.

When we are afflicted, we should look upon God, and call upon God, and search after the end which we think God aims at. At that day, *A man shall look to his mother; and his eyes shall have respect to the holy one of Israel*, Isa. 17.7.

3. This should be a ground of our patience under crosses, because they come from God. Trouble springs not out of the ground, but it comes from God, from Heaven, who hath a power over us, and a love towards us, even in those Judgments that he layeth upon us. And therefore when the cup of Afflictions is put into our hands, let every Christian consider, and say, how bitter soever this cup

cup is, which I am to drink ; and by whomsoever it is handed to me, yet my comfort is this, that it is my Heavenly Fathers mixing : And though there be some displeasing Judgments in it ; yet through Grace, I will say, as Christ himself did, *John 18. 11. The cup which my Father giveth me, shall I not drink it ? It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good,* saith old *Eli.*

Charles the V. is honourable, for acknowledging the hand of God upon him in his distress. *Am me ab omnibus desertum video. Thine eyes have seen me environed with great armies : Now thou seest me abandoned of mine ordinary servants.* I acknowledg this change, to come from him, with whom, is no shadow of change : *From the mighty hand of God, and I will by no means withstand it.* This he spake to one who saw him in distress. That ingenuous, and Learned *Cajetan*, when the *French Army* had taken *Rome* ; acknowledged it to be the just Judgment of God, that they were made a Spoil, a Prey, and Captives.

I will bear the indignation of the Lord, Micah 7. 9. We are the work of Gods hands ; we are in his hand, as the clay is in the hand of the Potter, he may do with us as he pleaseth : And therefore when we are afflicted either in Body, Estate, or by the loss of Relations ; let us lay our mouths in the dust ; let us acknowledg his Justice, in all that is come

come upon us, considering that he hath a power over us, and that we have deserved it.

Some of Gods Saints, knowing their own deserts by sin, and knowing Gods goodness towards them, (even) in Judgments, have been so far from impatient thoughts, as that they have had an high esteem of crosses, and have pray'd for them. *Feri Domine, feri clementer : strike Lord and it shall be a mercy, said Luther. O Lord, correct me, said Prophet Jerem. 10. 24.*

4. You see in the Text, that God threatens to be to *Ephraim* as a moth. Now a moth doth not presently consume a Garment but by degrees. In this comparison we may see the patience and forbearance of God.

It is said of *Absalom*, when he came to do his Brother *Amnon* a mischief, 2 Sam. 13. 22, *That he spake to him neither good or bad.* When men intend mischief one against another, they give no notice of their intention. But God doth otherwise when he hath a purpose to bring evil upon a People; he gives them notice of it before: God sends first *verba*, and then *verbera*; first words, and then blows. He sends Lightning, and then Thunder. He first makes use of the staff of Beauty, then of the staff of Bands.

God deals with a sinful People, as *Tamberlain*, the Emperor of the *Scytbians*, did with fenced Cities :

ties ; he did first hang out the white Flag, then a red Flag, and then a black Flag. God first sends out the white Horse, that is the Gospel ; and then a red Horse, that is, the Sword ; and then a black Horse, that is, Famin ; and then a pale Horse, and that is Death.

God first makes use of the Rod, then of the Axe ; but the longer he holds off the blow, the harder he will strike at last : though he hath Leaden heels, yet he hath Iron hands : though he be slow, he is sure : *Tarditatem supplicii gravitate compensat* ; though he be slow in punishing, yet he makes it grievous at last. Where the sins of a People are full, so that they thereby provoke God to the very face, then comes destruction upon them like a sweeping rain, that carries straw, and wood, and earth all together with it.

When the People of *Bohemia* slighted the Gospel, and grew licentious in their Lives, then the great Persecution began among them. When the Ancient Britains were come to that height of sin, so as to cast *Odium in Religionis Professores, tanquam in Adversarios*, to hate the Professors of Religion, as their greatest Adversaries ; then they had great Judgments fell upon them, and were destroyed by the Saxons, as *Bede* and *Gildas* relate.

God doth not willingly afflict the Children of men, but as being drawn to it by compulsion of Justice: And when he doth execute his Judgments, he doth it by degrees. Gods patience, in this respect, is much seen in the Destruction of Jericho: He was seven days in destroying it. God was but six days in making the whole World, and he was seven days in destroying that one City: One day longer in destroying one City, than in making the Universe.

5. Hence we learn, that the meritorious, and procuring cause of Judgments, is sin. It is true, that we ought to be careful in our judging of particular Persons; when we hear of Judgments falling upon them. This our Saviour mentions, and intimates, Luke 13, *Suppose ye that those Galileans were sinners above all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay.*

The reason of Gods Judgments upon particular Persons may be unknown to us. Sometimes God may bring Judgments upon particular Persons, as an Act of his Wisdom: sometime as an Act of his Sovereignty. But when he brings Judgments upon Kingdoms and Nations, then he doth it as an Act of his Justice for sins. National Judgments are for National sins: *Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a Nation as this?* Jer. 9. 9. Those

Those sins are to be accounted National sins which the concurrent voices of Gods Ministers declare to be so. Now surely Ministers agree in this, that Pride, Incontinency, Luxury and Drunkenness, Sedition and Faction are the reigning sins of our Kingdom; and we have reason to think, that for these sins, the Land will mourn. As God is the Author of Judgments, so sin is the meritorious and procuring cause of Judgments. The Flood came not upon the Earth, till the Earth was filled with cruelty. The Fire and Brimstone came not from Heaven to consume Sodom and Gomorrah, till the sins thereof were exceeding great; and the cry of them came up to Heaven. The cup of Gods Wrath is never full mixt with red Wine, until the measure of Crimson sins and Scarlet sins be filled up: Nor are the Dregs thereof poured out upon sinners, till they be frozen upon their Dregs, and like Moab, settled upon the Lees of their sins.

Should a People under Judgments, cry out as the Heathen Emperor did, when he came to die, What have I done, that I must now die? Should we say, What have we done, that we must be thus afflicted; should we cry out as they did to the Prophet, *Jer. 16. 10*, Wherefore hath the Lord pronounced all this evil against us? or what is our iniquity? or what is our sin committed against the Lord our God? The

Lord could quickly give an Answer, and could shew us the abundance of sins that are the cause of our troubles, and could easily manifest his Justice in all his proceedings, being first stirred up by our sins.

God doth usually proportion Judgments according to Peoples sins; so that a People shall see their sin, even in their Judgments. There is in sin, not only a natural Production of evil in general, but there is also a Proportion of parts, and Dimensions. It has been often seen, that Divine Judgments, by some conformity, do carry in them a stamp of that sin for which they are inflicted. Seditious *Corah*, and his Company, were overwhelme'd by an Earthquake, which in Nature is a kind of Sedition. The Massacre at *Paris* was retaliated upon the chief Actors and Contrivers of it: *Charles* the then King died bathed in Blood; *Anjou* the succeeding Kjng, was slain in the same Room where the Massacre was Plotted. Thus God doth proportion his Judgments according to mens sins, that he may shew the equity of his proceedings. He does it also in mercy, that so men may more easily find out the cause of Judgments, and may take away the cause by Repentance.

6. Hence we learn the cause, why there are such depths, and such mysteries in those Judgments,

ments, that fall upon men. O, it is because they come from God.

Nebuchadnezar said, *Dan. 2. 25, 3,* I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream. And he sent for the Astrologers, and Sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to shew him the dream and the interpretation thereof; And they answered him, *Vers. 10,* That there was not a man upon the Earth, that could shew the Kings matter.

The Judgments of God are as wheels within wheels, *Ezek. 1. 16.* Saith the Lord, *Hab. 1. 5, 6,* Behold ye among the Heathen, and regard and wonder marvellously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe though it be told you. For I will raise up the Chaldeans, &c. What is the reason, that there should be such mysteries in those Judgments that are laid upon men? What is the reason, that men stand wondering at the troubles and calamities that are upon many in the World, and are not able to find out the depth of them? O, here is the reason, because they have their derivation from God; who hath Clouds and Darkness round about him; who hath infinite wisdom, and strength everlasting: whose ways (in his Judgments) are unsearchable.

7. Observe this; That though in a common calamity, the same troubles and crosses fall upon the good

good and bad, yet there is a great difference between them. There are Arrows of Judgment, and Arrows of Mercy; the one God shoots at them whom he hates; the other he shoots at them whom he loves. The wicked, by their Arrows, are punished out of wrathful Vengeance; the godly, by their Arrows, are disciplined out of Mercy. The afflictions of the godly are the issue of Gods fatherly dislike and displeasure, which is mixed with love: Upon the wicked, they are the issue of Gods wrath, as an incensed Judge. In such a case God deals with his own peculiar People, as a Father with his Children: and with the wicked, as a Judge with a Malefactor.

Afflictions upon the godly, are not formal punishments; they are not inflicted of God, as an a-venging Judge, but as a provident Father: They are not laid upon them as destructive punishments, but as healing medicines. They differ as much as a Father whipping his Child, and a Lord cudgeling his Slave. They differ as much as a Butcher cutting the flesh, and a Chirurgeon's doing it. So Augustine differenceth them.

In a Kingdom or Nation, wicked men commit such and such sins, and possibly the godly may be overcome by temptations, and may commit the same sins: Now when God, for such sins, sends either

either Famine, or Sword, or Pestilence into a Kingdom, good men fall by them as well as the bad; that so wicked men may not have occasion to say, that God is a partial God. Yet we must note, that the death of the wicked is a Plague to them, and it is laid upon them, that they may pass into everlasting torments, and may die eternally: And the death of the Saints, by any of these means, is precious in the sight of God, and is to them a blessing, and a passage into glory.

That, which to the wicked is a punishment, issuing from vindictive Justice, to another is an affliction, issuing from a paternal Love: That which to one is a curse, to another is a blessing: That which is laid upon one [in wrath] for his damnation, is laid upon another [in mercy] for his correction, for his comfort and salvation.

8. Let us make a right use of Gods Judgments, and let us labour to get benefit by them; there is a benefit to be had by them: *It was good (said David) for me, that I was afflicted, Psal. 119. 11.*

The benefits of afflictions are many.

First, Men are thereby drawn near to God. Indeed, afflictions unsanctified, drive men farther from God; thus was *Pharaoh*: But afflictions sanctified, draw men near to God. The Prodigal Son, being brought to extremity, return'd to his Father.

Father. A Christian is like a Ball, which the harder it is smitten downward, the higher it rebounds upward; like Noah's Ark, which when the waters were deepest, was nearest to Heaven. *In their afflictions they will seek me early, Hosea 5. 13.*

Affliction is like a Shepherds Dog, as Chrysostom calls it, which gripes not the Sheep, but layeth hold of it, and fetcheth it, and delivers it to his Master. The Stones cast at Steven, did but knock him closer to Christ, the corner Stone.

Secondly, Men hereby come to have a more clear knowledg of God, and of his truths. *Schola crucis, est Schola lucis.* Luther did not understand some Psalms, till he was in affliction. When John was banished into the Isle Patmos, he then received a Revelation. Olevian and Rollock professed, that they never came to that height of the knowledg of Gods Majesty, and their own sins, as in their sickness.

Thirdly, Afflictions are a means of sanctification. Indeed the Spirit is the principal efficient working cause of it; but the Spirit useth means in the working of our sanctification. Sufferings in the flesh are a means of our cessation from sin, 1 Pet. 4. 1. Affliction is an extinguisher of sin; and it is an incentive of grace. Affliction is as a Flail to fetch us out of the Husks; it burns up sin, it makes virtue shine;

shine: It is as a file and whetstone, which makes more bright and sharp; it files off those fetters, which hinder us from running the way of Gods Commandments. It is as water in which man is full'd: God is the Fuller, and affliction is the water, in which man is whited. By this the iniquity of Jacob shall be purged.

Fourthly, Affliction brings men to a knowledg and a sense of their sins. Joseph's Brethren, in their extremity, confess their sin in their cruel dealing with their Brother. Daniel, being with the Israelites in bondage, set about the Confession of sins. Dan. 9. 5, *We have sinned; and committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and thy judgments.*

Ursin tells us, that those who fled out of England in Queen Maries days, acknowledged, that that great inundation of misery came justly upon them, for their great unprofitableness under the means of grace, which they enjoyed in King Edwards days.

Fifthly, Affliction works humility. *Humble your selves under the mighty hand of God,* 1 Pet. 5. 6. When the Israelites were smitten at Ai, Then Joshua rent his cloaths, and fell to the Earth, upon his face, before the Ark of the Lord, until the eventide, he, and the Elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads, Josh. 7. 6. Likewise Manasseh, when he was in affliction, besought

the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his Fathers.

Sixtly, Affliction puts men upon fervent Prayer: they are not tongue-tyed in the midst of calamities, but they break silence in the midst of dangers. It is an easie matter for a man to say a *Pater Noster* at any time; but affliction teacheth men to cry *Abba, Father.* When men lye flat upon their backs, by reason of adversities, then they will lift up their hands, their hearts, and voices in Prayer. *They poured out a prayer, when thy chastening was upon them, Isa. 26.16.* So did Hezekiah in the time of his sickness. *Lord save us, we perish,* said the Disciples in the time of a Tempest. *Lord save me,* said Peter, when he was ready to sink.

Indeed, some, instead of Praying to God, in a time of Judgments, have murmured against God: so did the *Israelites in the Wilderness.* Others, at such a time, have blasphemed against God; so did the King of *Samaria* in a time of famin: But when Judgments are sanctified, then they enlarge the heart, and open the mouth in Prayer to God.

Sevently, Afflictions beget a contempt of the World. A Feaver, the Gout, or Stone, makes all things of the World appear vain: Let pleasure, at such a time, open all her Shops, and present a sick and dying Man with the choicest Rarities, How ready

ready will he be to cry out, Away with them? When one of the Ferdinands, a Christian Emperor, was overcome with sickness, his Chaplain Matthias Cittardus came to visit him, and call'd him most Invincible Emperor: but the story saith, *In-
vincissimi titulum agnoscere nolebat.* In his sickness he would not admit of that compellation; nor of that title of the most Invincible, and charged him to use it no more.

In afflictions men see the things of the World to be unconstant and mutable, to be unprofitable and deceitful: like Jonah's Gourd, which withered then, when the greatest comfort and refreshment was expected from it.

Eightly, Afflictions beget in men a love to Gods Word, as being that that conveys comforts. This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me. Unless thy Law had been my delight, I should then have perished in my trouble. The word of God will lay before you helps, supplies, supports, and comforts, and will persuade you to believe against hope, to pray, to trust, to wait, and look for God,

Ninthy, Afflictions beget a desire after Life Eternall.

The Saints live in this World as in a Vale of Tears; and therefore they desire Heaven, where

God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and where there shall be no more death, nor torment, nor crying: neither shall there be any more pain.

The Saints, in this World, are like Noah's Dove out of the Ark, where it could find no place for to rest upon, but returned to the Ark again: So the Saints in the midst of troubles (finding an insufficiency in the Creatures to comfort and satisfie them) desire that their souls may be taken up from the temptations and troubles of the World, and that they may go to Heaven, where they shall have everlasting rest.

Here the Saints are Strangers and Pilgrims; therefore they desire Heaven, where they shall be Denizens. Here they are Pinnioned with mortality; therefore they desire Heaven, where they shall enjoy Eternity.

These are the several benefits of afflictions. Now we should endeavour to have a sanctified use of afflictions, that so we may partake of these benefits. God expects that afflictions should be as collision, which fetcheth fire out of the Flint: that they should be as the Winter weather that killeth the Vermin. God expects that his Judgments should be as bruising, which maketh Aromatical Spices to send out their savour.

Who

Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchants? Cant. 3.6. The Church coming out of the Wilderness, came with pillars of smoke; that is, with affections raised, perfumed with Myrrh and Frankincense. Myrrh was a thing used in Embalming, Frankincense was used in making up the holy Incense, by which, Prayers were signified; all Powders of the Merchants, that is, all graces of the Spirit: So that the meaning is this, When the Church came out of the Wilderness, that is, out of a troubled estate, she came with affections raised, perfum'd with graces, preserving from putrefaction, putting up fervent Prayers, and filled with all the graces of the Holy Ghost. These benefits the Spouse got by afflictions, and we should endeavour to get the like.

The last year but one, was such an extraordinary dry time, that the Heavens seem'd to be as Iron, and the Earth as Brass; and this year there has been such inundations of Water, as that the Clouds have seem'd to drop leanness as well as fatness. At such a time when God shall shake his hand over us, by such, or the like Judgments, we should set about these five things.

1. Let us consider of these Judgments.
2. Let us enquire after those sins which have procur'd them.
3. Let

3. Let us repent of them.

4. Let us endeavour after reconciliation.

5. Let us set up a reformation.

First, Let us consider of these Judgments.

There are many that have upon them a Stoical Apathy, a nummels of Spirit, a Spirit of slumber; so that they regard not the work of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands. *Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock, they have refused to return;* Jer. 5.3. *Ahaz is marked out for this,* 2 Chron. 28.22. Christians ought not to despise God's Judgments. Such persons are worse than Heathens. The Romans punished a young man, who was seen to look out of a Window, with a Crown of Roses upon his head, in a time of calamity.

Let this stir you up to a serious consideration of the Judgments that have been upon us. And know this, that roaring Judgments are the echo of crying sins: And know this, that those Judgments which are the greatest mischiefs, in *genere plena*, are procured by those sins which are the greatest evils, in *genere culpa*.

There are degrees of sins, and there are degrees of Judgments: Where there are great Judgments inflicted, there have been great sins committed.

Secondly,

Secondly, Therefore, in the second place, let us enquire after the sins that have procured these Judgments.

The Mariners in Jonahs Ship, though they were Heathens, yet, when they perceived that the Tempest was neither natural nor ordinary, they conjectured, that there was some-body in the Ship that was guilty of some grievous sin; whereupon they desired to discover the truth, by casting Lots; according to the custom of the Heathens.

Josephis Brethren, in their extremity, quickly perceived the sin, which they thought was the occasion of it. We are verily guilty concerning our Brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear: therefore is this distress come upon us.

When there was a Discovery made to Joshua, that the Israelites could not stand before their Enemies, because there was an accursed thing among them; Joshua made a strict enquiry after Achan, and after the Babylonish Garment, and the wedge of Gold, and he caused him to be stoned, and his Sons and his Daughters, and all their substance, to be burnt with fire.

Now the sins of this Kingdom are chiefly these, Ignorance of God, of his truths, and ways; neglect of Gods Worship, practical Atheism, stubborness.

bornness against God, unthankfulness under mercies, sacriledg, contempt of Ministers, prophanation of the Lords day, and of the Sacrament, by not preparing for it; by coming to it with evil affections, and not having a conversation answerable to it. Carnal security and earthly-mindedness. Vain, rash, and false swearing. Fraud and falsehood in buying and selling. Luxury and Drunkenness. Filthy Imaginations, wanton looks, obscene speeches, and meretricious practices; hatred, malice, desire of revenge, contention, murder, rebellion and treason: these are the crying sins of the Kingdom. What could the Lord have done more for us than he hath done? And what could we do more against God than we have done? Consider seriously of that large enumeration of sins, that I have given you: Could there be more said against Sodom and Gomorrah? Could there be more said against the old World, that was overthrown by a Deluge? Could there be more said against Babylon, that is now fallen? Could there be more said against Samaria and Jerusalem, which have been made a desolation? Shall we exceed others in sins, and shall we think so to be exempted from those Judgments that consumed them? As we have been notorious for sins, so, without repentance, we have reason to think we shall be made notorious for sufferings.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, And therefore in the third place, let us set about Repentance. When wrath is gone forth it is high time to repent; and therefore, in the strength of grace, set about Repentance, and let your Repentance be accompanied with fervent Prayer: This is the way to remove Judgments.

If I send a Pestilence among my people; If my people which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their evil ways: then will I hear from Heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land, 2 Chron. 7. 13, 14.

We should be humbled for our own sins, and the sins of others. David's eyes gush'd out with tears, because men kept not the Law. Lot's righteous soul was vexed for the unlawful deeds of the Sodomites. The soul of Jeremiah wept in secret for the pride of the times. We should be troubled, not only for the sins of others, but for the miseries of others. There is a wo against such as are not grieved for the afflictions of Joseph.

Fourthly, Let us endeavour after a Reconciliation; make your Peace with God, compound with your Creditor, agree with your Adversary: if you refuse this reconciliation, you will shew your selves stubborn, but neither Valiant nor Wise. Therefore Offer Christ to the Father, by a lively faith, as an Atonement for your sins; that so, as the Son of God

became the Son of Man, so you, who are the Sons of Men, through Christ, may become the Sons of God.

We are ambassadors for Christ, saith the Apostle, We pray you, in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God. Oh ! therefore, that God, and you, who have all this while been at variance, by reason of your sins, might this day be like two high swelling streams, which after some soft struglings, gently mix their curling Waves, and become one Flood.

Fifthly, Set up a Reformation ; many great sinners have been reformed. S. Paul, who was a great Persecutor, became a zealous Preacher. Augustine, of an effeminate Youngster, became an illuminate Doctor. Luther, a zealous Papist, became an excellent Pillar in the House of God.

*S. Ambrose speaks of a young Penitent Man, who was courted by his Minion, *Cur non respicias ? Ego sum.* Hearken, it is I, *sed ego, non sum ego,* I though you are still the same Woman, yet I am not the same Man.*

Let the Law of God, and these Examples, persuade us to reform our liyess. Get an immunity from sin, and get grace in the habir, and obedience in the act : Get a root of grace in the heart, and fruits of righteousness in the Life. Let those eyes be drown'd with tears that have burned with lust. Let him that hath stolen, steal no more. Obliterate and tread out

your former footing: return by a line in the path of your sins. You that have deformed your souls by vices, now adorn them by vertues. Let those who have been filled with Phanatick-rage, and wild Enthusiasm, let them now embrace the true Christian Religion. Let those who have endeavoured to remove Stars from their Orbs, to throw down Kings and Bishops, to banish, imprison and murder Loyal Subjects. Let those who have endeavoured to abolish Religion, to overturn Foundations, to abrogate Laws, to dissolve the Government of Church and State; let them now return to their Allegiance and Obedience: let them now endeavour to be Repairers of the breaches of their Country, and to be restorers of paths to dwell in.

If People would thus reform themselves, then God would be merciful and gracious, and then our calamities would prove to be, not angry Curses, but Blessings, and might be a means of our advancement. Bonaventure speaks thus of temporal Judgments, *Pæna temporales, non tantum sunt punitivæ, but promotivæ.* There are some punishments that are ordain'd for the overthrow of Gods Enemies; and there are others for the reclamation of Servants: Fatherly corrections, and gentle visitations, whereby God humbles us, and are to raise us to an higher degree in his favour, and to set us up a step nearer to Heaven.

F I N . I . S .